

United States Department of Agriculture



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MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 260-5-24

SUBJECT: INF – MINNESOTA NRCS MARKETING NEWS RELEASE

Purpose. To provide a Marketing Team News Release.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005.

Attached to this bulletin is a generic news release entitled ***Producers Study ‘CSP 101’ at Information Meetings***. It was prepared for the NRCS Marketing Team by Dave Copeland from the Rochester Field Office, and is intended for use by field offices. This release is the fourth in a series of monthly news releases sponsored by the Minnesota NRCS Marketing Team. Please feel free to adapt, as needed, and distribute as soon as possible to your local news outlets.

Questions regarding the MN NRCS Marketing Team efforts should be directed to John Nicholson, Marketing Chair, and public information efforts should be directed to Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs Specialist.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

Attachment

DIST: AE

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: xxxxx x xxxxx
_____ County NRCS District Conservationist

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRODUCERS STUDY 'CSP 101' AT INFORMATION MEETINGS

ROCHESTER, MN, MARCH 5, 2005 - This year, producers in Minnesota's selected watersheds learn all they can about the Conservation Security Program (CSP) through the close to 50 information meetings scheduled statewide.

Producers attending CSP meetings, hosted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, believe in the program's concept of paying farmers for being conservation-minded.

"We hope to use CSP not only as a program to reward our best conservation farmers, but as a motivator to the rest of our farmers to do an even better job of protecting our soil and water resources so they will be eligible in the future," says (DC's NAME), NRCS District Conservationist in _____ County. "We have a number of federal, state and local programs to help them implement practices so they will meet future CSP enrollment requirements."

When asked if the program eligibility is realistic, producers have responded favorably, saying that they believed they are eligible and will sign up for CSP when the enrollment period is announced.

In 2004, the Blue Earth watershed was the only Minnesota watershed chosen to be in the pilot program of CSP. Eighteen watersheds were involved in the nationwide pilot, with a budget of \$41 million. In 2005, 202 watersheds are eligible. In Minnesota, five watersheds have been selected: Red Lake, Redeye, Sauk, Redwood and Root.

Unlike some of the farm programs of the past, producers learned at the information meetings that this isn't a program in which a farmer can bring in a box of records to a county Service Center and have the staff do the work and determine eligibility. Farmers will fill their own data into a "self-assessment" workbook.

"I've seen a growing interest among producers in learning about the Conservation Security Program," says (DC's LAST NAME). "They want to learn how their specific farming practices may or may not meet the program minimum requirements. They generally like the concept of rewarding farmers for their past environmental stewardship efforts."

Producers are encouraged to keep at least two years of records to complete the CSP self assessment. For those not in one of the selected watershed for the 2005 sign up, attending an information meeting is a good place to ask questions and prepare documentation for future sign ups. Information meetings for the Conservation Security Program continue to run throughout the state, within the selected watershed regions. For more information about CSP, visit www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/csp.html or contact your local NRCS Service Center.

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